

In the news

Eurotunnel upgrade

Eurotunnel has taken delivery of the first of its locomotives to be upgraded from 5.6 to 7MW. The loco (formerly 9025) arrived back at Eurotunnel's Folkestone terminal as 9825 on 24 February from Brush Traction at Loughborough. Eurotunnel's original fleet of 5.6 MW locomotives are all being upgraded to 7MW over the next six years in a

£95m contract with Brush Traction and Bombardier.

To mark the 10th anniversary of the official opening of the Channel Tunnel, the loco features a special commemorative strapline, celebrating the ten year partnership between Eurotunnel, Bombardier and Brush, and is featured in English on one side, and French on the other.



The latest locomotive destined to haul the Royal Train was unveiled by EWS when 67002 The Royal Messenger was shown to the press at Toton Traction Maintenance Depot.

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Will this make tram systems affordable?

HOLDFAST LEVEL CROSSINGS LIMITED has formed a new company, HoldFast Carpet Track Limited, to launch HoldFast Carpet Track which the company believes will dramatically reduce the cost of installing tram systems in the UK and worldwide.

HoldFast has a track record of innovation within the rail industry, holding the Queen's Award for Innovation, and last year winning the Network Rail Environment Award.

The HoldFast Carpet Track is a multi-traffic platform, into which the track lines are bedded, that is designed to be exceptionally easy and inexpensive to lay. This is primarily because the Carpet Track sits just 150mm below the surface it is laid upon. The green rubber platform embeds the rails so as to be flush with the surrounding surfaces.

The flexibility and resilience of the Carpet Track means that it is suitable for trams with up to a five-ton axle load, although it is possible to supply Carpet Track for much higher wheel loads.

HoldFast is also launching an alternative to Carpet Track, Green Line Tramway. For this System, the surface features a recycled rubber matrix with soil infill permitting grass to grow.

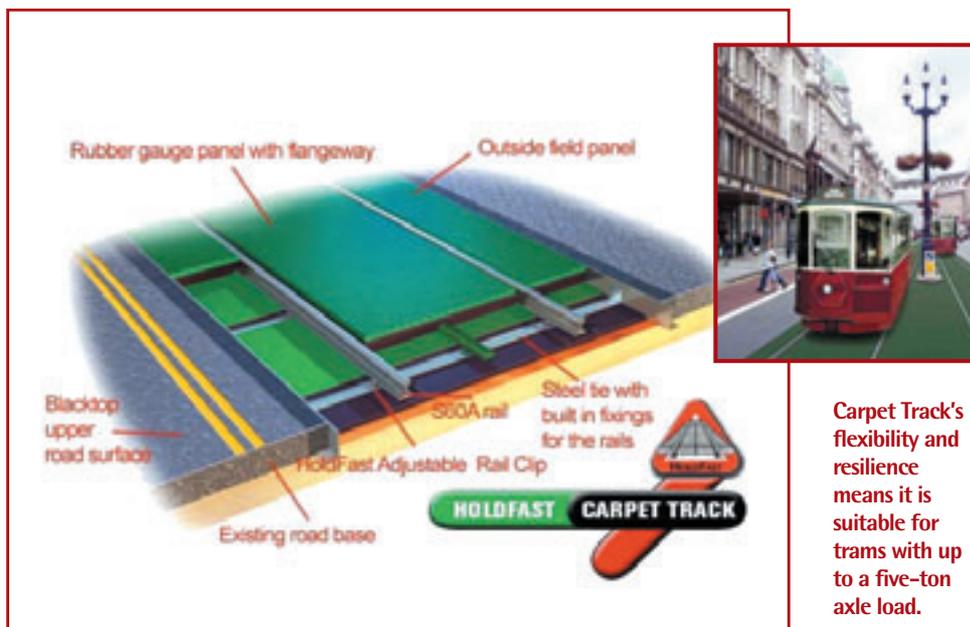
New opportunities

The significant savings, derived from reduced installation costs and road closure times, opens up a range of new possibilities. One of the most exciting is the opportunity to take trams online to mainline stations, providing a complete main-to-urban connection. Talks are already under way with both Network Rail and Strategic Rail Authority.

The Carpet Track is designed for installation in the 'blacktop' layer of a roads surface for implementation in existing urban environments. Installation and commensurate disruption is minimised by HoldFast supplying a pre-fitted 'kit' of parts that negates the need for heavy plant typically required in such operations.

The track platform has been developed in consultation with manufacturers of steel rails, and with contracting firms specialising in railway civil engineering, and tram manufacturers and operators. The HoldFast Adjustable Rail Clip has been incorporated in to the System, affixed to S60A rails, to allow lateral rail movement for flexible gauge widths where necessary.

Peter Coates Smith, founder and managing director of HoldFast Level Crossings, explains why he believes this innovation will help realise many tram proposals that were previously deemed as simply unaffordable: 'The worldwide success of our level crossing system was based upon a model of collaboration, evaluation and



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'The Carpet Track is designed for installation in the "blacktop" layer of a roads surface for implementation in existing urban environments'

recycling and we have applied the same tried and tested principals and product technology in to the Carpet Track system.

'Our level crossing systems have improved road and rail safety; reduced road and rail closures and led to the recycling of more than ten million used rubber tyres. These achievements were recognised by our winning the Network Rail Environment Award. The same environmental considerations have been applied to the Carpet Track design, production process and installation technique to create flexibility, affordability and durability.'

John Parry OBE, managing director of Parys People Movers (which is behind the gas-powered PPM who have consulted to HoldFast) is excited by the development: 'We see this as a new beginning for tramways and feeder railways. Only around 20 urban areas have the density of passenger movements to justify what I would term "full-scale supertram systems" and it will take years of funds to be released for those cities at the back of the queue. Our evaluation has identified at least 200 towns and districts within cities that are seizing up, as traffic growth overwhelms road space and parking provision in their centres.

'HoldFast Carpet Track will enable tram manufacturers like ourselves to introduce the

benefits of light rail to such centres at an affordable price. Meanwhile, quiet railway lines that for years have been treated as economic black holes are now recognised as a potential focus for rural regeneration after conversion to light rail.'

Collaboration

Although the System is available to all tram operators, HoldFast developed HoldFast Carpet Track in collaboration with Parys People Movers, a similarly innovative business which has developed the PPM range of trams and railcars, approved for passenger service in the UK with the district tram and railbus range supplied with profound performance and environmental benefits.

The main inhibitors to the introduction of tram systems into town is the task, considered to be formidable, of putting in electrical infrastructure. PPM vehicles are gas powered, negating the need for an electric supply. This, coupled with the PPM's very light axle loads, have provided the opportunity for cost saving adaptations to the method of track construction.

Further information

www.carpettrack.co.uk

www.railcrossings.co.uk

www.railclips.co.uk